

We Claim:

1. A method for sorting delivery-information-bearing sortation items, using a continuous sorting conveyor, according to a specifiable destination route, with a number of destination route sections each subdivided into a number of destination sub-sections, the destination sub-sections having a number of consecutive destination positions, comprising the steps of:

- feeding the sortation items, in a first pass, to the continuous sorting conveyor using at least two feeding stations, said at least two feeding stations corresponding to no more than a number of destination route sections and having a number of sorting compartments disposed between two feeding stations;
- conveying, in a first sorting cycle, said sortation items according to their relevant destination position to a corresponding sorting compartment, the number of consecutive sorting compartments corresponding to the largest number of destination positions located within one of the destination sub-sections; and
- feeding said sortation items conveyed to said sorting compartments back to said sorting conveyor by said feeding stations, said feeding said sortation items being performed in a sequence of said destination positions and said sortation items conveyed according to their relevant destination sub-section to a sorting compartment corresponding to said destination sub-section as well as a number of sorting compartments corresponding to a number of destination sub-sections.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein, prior to said first pass, said sortation items are pre-sorted according to destination route sections and fed by said feeding stations in a preceding one of said sorting compartments associated said destination route sections.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein said number of sorting compartments required for sorting for a destination route section is disposed between two feeding stations.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the destination route sections are dimensioned such that an approximately even number of sortation items is sorted to each destination route section.

5. The method according to claim 2, wherein the destination route sections are dimensioned such that an approximately even number of sortation items is sorted to each destination route section.

6. The method according to claim 3, wherein the destination route sections are dimensioned such that an approximately even number of sortation items is sorted to each destination route section.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the number of destination positions and destination sub-sections within the destination route sections are approximately the same.

8. The method according to claim 2,

wherein the number of destination positions and destination sub-sections within the destination route sections are approximately the same.

5 9. The method according to claim 3,
 wherein the number of destination positions and
 destination sub-sections within the destination route
 sections are approximately the same.

10 10. The method according to claim 4,
 wherein the number of destination positions and
 destination sub-sections within the destination route
 sections are approximately the same.

15 11. The method according to claim 5,
 wherein the number of destination positions and
 destination sub-sections within the destination route
 sections are approximately the same.

20 12. The method according to claim 6,
 wherein the number of destination positions and
 destination sub-sections within the destination route
 sections are approximately the same.

25 13. The method according to claim 1, wherein
 between two feeding stations there are disposed at
 least two sorting compartments corresponding to
 destination route sections and a number of feeding
 conveyors corresponding to said destination route
30 sections, of which there are at least two, are
 disposed in the upstream feeding station.

14. The method according to claim 2, wherein

5 between two feeding stations there are disposed at
least two sorting compartments corresponding to
destination route sections and a number of feeding
conveyors corresponding to said destination route
sections, of which there are at least two, are
disposed in the upstream feeding station.

10 15. The method according to claim 3, wherein
between two feeding stations there are disposed at
least two sorting compartments corresponding to
destination route sections and a number of feeding
conveyors corresponding to said destination route
sections, of which there are at least two, are
disposed in the upstream feeding station.

15 16. The method according to claim 4, wherein
between two feeding stations there are disposed at
least two sorting compartments corresponding to
destination route sections and a number of feeding
conveyors corresponding to said destination route
20 sections, of which there are at least two, are
disposed in the upstream feeding station.

25 17. The method according to claim 7, wherein
between two feeding stations there are disposed at
least two sorting compartments corresponding to
destination route sections and a number of feeding
conveyors corresponding to said destination route
sections, of which there are at least two, are
30 disposed in the upstream feeding station.

18. The method according to claim 13, wherein
only sortation items are pre-sorted for one of the
route sections and fed to each feeding conveyor.

19. The method according to claim 14, wherein
only sortation items are pre-sorted for one of the
route sections and fed to each feeding conveyor.

5 20. The method according to claim 15, wherein
only sortation items are pre-sorted for one of the
route sections and fed to each feeding conveyor.

10 21. The method according to claim 16, wherein
only sortation items are pre-sorted for one of the
route sections and fed to each feeding conveyor.

15 22. The method according to claim 17, wherein
only sortation items are pre-sorted for one of the
route sections and fed to each feeding conveyor.